

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 13-23, and 47 are now pending in the application. Claims 4-12 and 24-46 have been withdrawn. Claims 4-12, while withdrawn, are also amended and have been designated as currently amended claims. Applicants respectfully note that the previous office action contained a typographical error, in that "claims 13-32" were designated as rejected claims. Applicant assumes that the Examiner intended to designate claims 13-23 as rejected claims instead, insofar as claims 24-32 have been withdrawn. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 13-23, and 47 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over either Zinger (U.S. Pat. No. 5,407,449) or Shimizu (JP 06-310424). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants note that Claim 1 as amended recites a transferring apparatus including a synchronization control unit for synchronizing a first drive unit of a first carrying apparatus with a second drive unit of a second carrying apparatus and at least one transfer robot for transferring wafers from a plurality of wafer mounts of the first carrying apparatus to a plurality of wafer mounts of the second carrying apparatus according to a drive control signal from the synchronization unit, the drive control signal corresponding to the synchronization between the first and second drive units. Neither

Zinger, Shimizu, nor the combination of Zinger and Shimizu teach such a transferring apparatus.

While Zinger and Shimizu include the processing of wafers, neither teach suggest or disclose transferring wafers with a transferring apparatus according to a drive control signal that is synchronized with first and second drive units of first and second carrying apparatuses.

The Examiner states that Claim 1 of Shimizu "implies a synchronization." Applicants respectfully disagree. Claim 1 of Shimizu recites "connecting" processing units. Applicants respectfully submit that simply "connecting" processing units does not amount to synchronizing drive units and transferring wafers according to the synchronization, as recited by claim 1.

For these reasons, the prior art does not teach or suggest each limitation of claim 1, which defines over the prior art. With regard to claims 2-3, and 13-23, Applicants note that each either directly or indirectly depends from claims 1, which defines over the prior art as discussed in detail above.

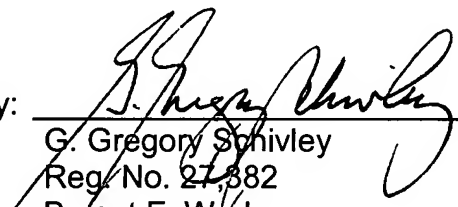
With regard to claim 47, a transferring method is recited, including limitations that while the drive unit of one carrying apparatus is synchronized with the drive unit of another carrying apparatus, the wafers are received from the plurality of wafer mounts of the one carrying apparatus and handed over to the plurality of wafer mounts of the other carrying apparatus according to the synchronization. Similar limitations are recited by claim 1. For at least the above reasons, claim 47 defines over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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